

contemplates the majesty of God, while the mighty orb of day is slowly sinking in the western sky, leaving behind footprints of glory, for already the sunset is burning like "the seal of God" on the closing day.

Pious worshippers may be seen at this hour seeking the quiet and solitude of the church, where, like a speck of flame, the little sanctuary lamp keeps its long vigil to tell of the Divine Prisoner in the lonely tabernacle. Here, wrapt in ecstasies of love, these holy souls kneel, while the evening

shades gather around them, until the sound of a bell reminds them of the passing hour. Then, beneath the shadow of Mary's protecting mantle, they recite the heaven-born "Angelus," praying that she who has kept them through the day will guide them in the path of righteousness to the very end, that she will help them always, but especially in that dread hour when the evening of life is drawing near, and their fast closing lips are unable to recite the beautiful prayer they love so well.

Written for the ADVOCATE.

✽ INDIAN WORSHIP. ✽ MESKAL EATERS. ✽

BY D. H. C.

In visiting last year, the Kiowa and Comanche Reservation, I had the good fortune to meet a *young gentleman, who has spent 12 years among the Indians, to study their language, religion and customs, and thanks to his kind intervention, I was allowed a privilege—very seldom, if ever, enjoyed by a white man—to assist at the religious ceremonies of these tribes. It is my intention to give a full account of my experience to the readers of the INDIAN ADVOCATE.

Before I begin, however, I wish to dispel some misconceptions in regard to Indian worship. It is a generally accepted opinion among us, that Indians believe in a Supreme Being, in a great and general ruler of the universe whom they call the *Great Spirit*. But this is not correct. The notion of a Supreme Being, as we understand it, belongs to the white man, and was probably introduced among the red men by the early missionaries who may have also added to his vocabulary the words "Great Spirit." But as to the Indian himself he is a heathen, he is no monotheist. He believes in Spirits it is true, but

under this name he understands only the hidden forces of nature. In fact *Nature* is his god as being his source of *Life*, and everything that produces or entertains life is considered by him part of the Divinity. Thus fire and water are worshipped by the Indian because they are the great physical agents of life, and because he considers them as symbols of the two great principles, active and passive, from which all things derive their existence. Thus again, for instance, he worships the eagle, the oak, the sage, not as an animal, a plant, a tree, but as secondary powers, or rather as representing secondary powers, whose function it is to preside over the growth of the species of birds, of trees, of plants. Each secondary spirit has a department in the kingdom of nature, and there are as many of these spirits as there are species, even grass has a special spirit presiding over its growth. Such, I believe, is in short the system of Indian theology. Besides, however, trees, birds and plants, there is a mysterious fruit which is considered by the Indian as very sacred, and which, I believe has never been described by any writer,

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